

06/08/07

Dear Congressman Jerry Weller,

Yesterday while finishing dinner, my wife and I received a call from my son that he was involved in an automobile accident approximately 1 ½ mile from our home. He attempted to call us from his cell phone but did not receive a signal. The other person in the accident also could not immediately call for help. After my son walked to the top of a hill in a wooded area he was finally able to complete his call.

Fortunately in this incident no one was hurt. But the concern that we do not have cellular service at our home and the surrounding 5 miles, which is located in Rural Kankakee County, is disturbing.

I have lived at my current address since June of 1992, now 15 years. Within this time frame I have had more than 25 automobile/truck/semi tractor trailer accidents in front of my home. Two of these accidents have resulted in three fatalities. I have replaced at least four mailboxes.

In one of the fatalities I was speaking with one of the victims of the accident who had crawled out of his vehicle and was lying in the middle of the State Highway. This individual had worked for CVS pharmacy which I noted by his name tag that was still on his shirt. I asked him what CVS and he told me the one in Cedar Lake. After three attempts to get a cellular signal I got the number to the pharmacy from 411. After another two attempts to get a cell signal I was able to call the pharmacy. I had asked if they had a manager there by the name of John Doe and they said they did. I asked if they could contact this individual's next of kin and inform them that he was involved in an automobile accident, and let them know he would be in route to the hospital. The person I was speaking to asked if the accident was bad, I indicated to them that he hit a Semi-tractor-trailer head on. I gave them my cell phone number and hung up. About 15 minutes later someone called to ask about John Doe and I handed the phone to the police officer in charge to give further information. In just a few seconds my cell call dropped and no further calls were received at that point. John Doe died on his way to the hospital.

As a past Emergency Medical Technician and 17 years as a fireman, I intervene in all of the accidents in front of my home and I usually have all victims triaged before the fire department and ambulance arrives. At times from the incident I attempt by cell phone to notify the County Dispatcher of specialized equipment that is needed to handle the situation but receiving a cellular signal is next to impossible at times.

I believe not only in my situation but for everyone's safety it is imperative that the ability to provide cellular service in remote rural areas is almost more important than in a congested city where there are many eyes to observe an incident and many doors to go to for help in an emergency. In the country without a cell phone you could literally wait for hours or days for help. The cell phone if you are able to use it becomes your life line.

Please do what ever is in your power to see that there is no Cap on the Universal Service Fund. Please do your part for the people of the State of

Illinois. Please SAVE A LIFE! Please vote against the Cap on the Universal Service Fund.

Thanks for your time.

Gary Kole

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